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# How Iraq Conceals and Obtains Its Weapons of Mass Destruction

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## How Iraq Conceals and Obtains Its Weapons of Mass Destruction

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By [Ibrahim al-Marashi](#)

*After the 1991 Gulf War, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein conducted a systematic concealment operation to disrupt the mission of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), whose mandate was to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This article surveys and analyzes the different techniques used to fool and foil inspectors so as to conceal continued development or possession of these weapons.*

After Iraq's defeat in the 1991 war over Kuwait, the Iraqi government was forced to accept agreements, defined and authorized by UN resolutions, mandating its full cooperation in giving up all weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In response, Iraq developed a concealment apparatus: a network of intelligence agencies, military units and government ministries assigned to procure, hide, and defend Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. By 1998, while many weapons had been uncovered and destroyed often in the face of Iraqi non-compliance the lack of cooperation forced the withdrawal of inspectors.

In late 2002, however, a new UN resolution giving Iraq one more chance to implement its pledges led to a new round of inspections by the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC). Concurrently, the concealment apparatus continues to function, albeit with some modifications. These same agencies also have a role in directing and controlling Iraq's weapons systems, as well as procurement. This network involves thousands of officials from Iraq's General Intelligence, Special Security Organization, Military Industry Commission and the Special Republican Guards.

Iraq's denial and deception process was characterized in a U.S. Department of Defence briefing as "The deliberate, methodical, extensive and well-organized national-level strategic effort which aims at deceiving not just the United States, not just the United Nations or even the public media, but, in fact, the entire world." (1)

According to the briefing, Iraq's strategy has three key objectives. The first objective is for Iraq to demonstrate ostensible compliance with UN resolutions. This ostensible compliance is an attempt to undermine the credibility of the need for an inspections regime and then, further, to erode support for continued sanctions. The second objective is to ensure that UN inspectors will not uncover the full scope of Iraq's WMD and missile programs. The third objective is to obstruct UN inspectors from completely disarming Iraq of its chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile capabilities. (2)

The goals of the concealment apparatus, according to UNSCOM, have been to "retain production capability and the know-how documentation necessary to revive programs when possible." (3) The apparatus has been in charge of concealing the full extent of the nuclear and chemical weapons programs (including the VX project), and retaining the required production equipment and raw materials. In this regard, it has been responsible for the concealment of warheads capable of delivering chemical and biological munitions; indigenous long-range missile production, and retaining

guidance systems and missile engines production capability. Finally, this network has been tasked with concealing the very existence of Iraq's offensive biological weapons program, while retaining all of its necessary production capabilities.(4)

Each intelligence agency has its own special role in this process. The elite Special Security Organization, Amn al-Khas, headed by Saddam's son Qusay, serves as one of the major command-and-control oversight bodies of this concealment network. General Intelligence, al-Mukhabarat has at least two sub-directorates involved in the concealment effort: a covert operations unit and a covert procurement unit. Military Intelligence (*al-Istikhabarat*) has a role in the strategic concealment of Iraq's WMDs, while General Security's (*al-Amn al-'Amm*) military unit, the Emergency Forces (*al-Quwwat al-Tawariqa*), provides security for the facilities that house these programs.

The Special Republican Guard (SRG—*al-Haris al-Jamhuri al-Khas*) is involved in the transportation, concealment and guarding of military facilities and materials. The al-Hadi agency, which is responsible for monitoring signals intelligence, is believed to eavesdrop on UN inspectors' communications. One of the most important agencies of all in the concealment operation is the Military Industrial Commission (MIC), which is part of the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization (MIMI). Both MIMI and MIC oversee Iraq's military industries and seek to conceal sensitive activities from UN inspectors.(5)

These agencies form a vast, complex and wide-ranging labyrinth, all of which play a role in the procurement and concealment of Iraq's WMD program. The duties and functions of these agencies overlap, complying with Saddam's security doctrine of not allowing any one agency to have a monopoly over any one area of securing and concealing Iraq's WMD program. While the agencies play a key role in this concealment process, its coordination is clearly a family affair. All the individuals involved were brought into the project only after very careful investigations about their personal connections and loyalty to Saddam.(6) The heads of these agencies are generally from Saddam's immediate family, his al-Bu Nasir clan or from his hometown of Tikrit.

In May 1991, Saddam Hussein formed a Concealment Operations Committee (COC) to be supervised by Qusay.(7) UNSCOM inspectors became aware of the existence of this covert network as a result of inspections and interviews conducted between 1991 and 1996. They believed that this apparatus, created in 1991, was designed to hide documents, computer records, and equipment related to its WMD program. When the COC was created, the Iraqis believed that the inspection process would last only a few months. They based their assessment on the model of previous IAEA inspections, which had examined Iraqi nuclear facilities without detecting the Iraqi nuclear weapons program.(8)

UNSCOM investigations into the activities and tactics of the concealment apparatus began in March 1996 and were continuously impeded by the Iraqis. As a result, UNMOVIC's, and its predecessor UNSCOM's, mandate evolved from inspection agencies to detective agencies in order to investigate, impede and unravel the activities of this Iraqi concealment network. Chairman of UNMOVIC Hans Blix declared on January 28, 2003, "As we know, the idea that Iraq would declare its weapons and then the inspectors would verify these statements too often turned into a game of hide and seek."(9)

The hide and seek game mentioned in Blix's statement has characterized the interaction between the Iraqi concealment apparatus and UN inspectors. Blix adds, "Rather than just verifying declarations and supporting evidence, the two inspecting organizations found themselves

engaged in efforts to map the weapons programs and to search for evidence through inspections, interviews, seminars, inquiries with suppliers and intelligence organizations. (10) Blix indicated that the deception practiced by the Iraqi concealment apparatus continues unabated.

The concealment apparatus has launched a coordinated effort to thwart full discovery of Iraq's proscribed programs. These agencies have used numerous techniques to disrupt, thwart and fool UN weapons inspectors. (11) One tactic the Iraqis have used was to falsely insist that they had destroyed most of their WMD arsenal themselves (known as unilateral destruction), that their WMD infrastructure was destroyed during the 1991 war, or that chemical munitions were depleted during the war with Iran. Often the concealment apparatus would conduct a policy of calculated concessions, where it would sacrifice certain non-essential or outdated components to convince the inspectors that the Iraqis were cooperating. This policy of calculated concessions led to a cycle in which inspectors would discover the false nature of previous disclosures, Iraq would amend them, and then these new disclosures would, in turn, be discredited by the inspectors, thus leading to more new declarations. (12) As the military analyst Anthony Cordesman explained, these tactics created a morass of confusing false trails, documentation, sacrifice facilities, and stockpiles for the inspection team to find. (13)

Several related tactics that the concealment apparatus has used is the destruction or bulldozing WMD-related facilities, constructing false or decoy facilities or altering suspected facilities to deceive inspectors. A document found by UNSCOM in August 1995 demonstrates how these tactics were implemented. The Iraqi document, known as "The al-Atheer Center for the Development of Materials Production: Report of Achievements Accomplished from 1 June 1990 to 7 June 1991" recorded how the facility staff was ordered to remove evidence of nuclear weapons activities, evacuate documents to remote sites, physically alter the facility and conduct mock inspections to prepare for UN inspectors. (14)

According to U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's briefing to the UN on February 5, 2003, "We know that Iraq has embedded key portions of its illicit chemical weapons infrastructure within its legitimate civilian industry. To all outward appearances, even to experts, the infrastructure looks like an ordinary civilian operation." (15) The Iraqis learned how to conduct such tactics based on their own innovations as well as through KGB assistance in the early 1980s.

The concealment apparatus has focused on hiding only critical materials and WMD components, while destroying non-essential items unilaterally or handing them over to inspectors. It was reported that these critical components of the nuclear, biological, chemical and missile programs were dispersed to the environs surrounding Tikrit, Saddam's hometown, where they were concealed in presidential palaces or the residences of Iraqi security officials belonging to the Special Security Organization and Special Republican Guards. (16)

Proscribed materials and documents have been concealed in places ranging from the basements of official state buildings to the private farms of officers and officials. For example, during the last months of 1997, the Iraqis transported sensitive military materials to a large shed used to house military uniforms, within the compound of the Ba'ath party office in Baghdad. (17) A White House report states, "We have many reports of WMD material being buried, concealed in lakes, relocated to agricultural areas and private homes, or hidden beneath mosques or hospitals. In one report such material was buried in the banks of the Tigris River during a low water period." (18)

Documentation of Iraq's military program could also be easily concealed or evacuated from locations just prior to the inspectors' arrival or moved while guards or officials were stalling the UN personnel. At various times, documents relating to the WMD program were either destroyed, forged, or converted into microfiche to facilitate their concealment.(19) Richard Butler, former chairman of UNSCOM, relates that, during one inspection, the UNSCOM team was delayed for 20 minutes in front of a facility as the Iraqis scrambled to remove computer hard drives with critical WMD information stored on them.(20)

At times, materials were moved in the presence of UN inspectors. For example, during a September 17, 1997 visit, inspectors witnessed the movement and burning of documents which were then emptied into a nearby river.(21) Private homes could also be used to hide documents. On January 16, 2003, a joint UNMOVIC/IAEA team found a significant cache of documents related to Iraq's uranium enrichment program in the home of Iraqi scientist Faleh Hassan.(22) Hans Blix referred specifically to this instance, saying, "We cannot help but think that the case might not be isolated and that such placements of documents is deliberate to make discovery difficult and to seek to shield documents by placing them in private homes."(23)

Another possible, though unconfirmed, location for WMD materials are in mobile facilities. An unnamed Iraqi defector claims this is being done: "These are materials that are easy to transport. The military apparatuses and intelligence services trick lies in making these devices invisible by constantly moving them around on tanker trucks that travel either under escort or being trailed at a distance.(24) The German intelligence agency, BND, has also reported that WMD laboratories are hidden in trucks that appear completely normal on the outside.(25)

## THE EXECUTIVE BODIES OF THE CONCEALMENT APPARATUS

### *The Presidential Secretary*

One of the most powerful executive offices in Iraq is the Presidential Secretariat (*Sakratayr al-Ri'asa*), with a staff of about 100 people. All defense, security and intelligence matters are channeled through this office before reaching Saddam Hussein himself. General Security, General Intelligence, and Military Intelligence usually report directly to the Secretariat, before reporting to Saddam. Since the early 1990s, the Secretariat has been headed by Abid Hamid Mahmud who comes from Saddam's hometown of Tikrit and belongs to the Khatib family.(26)

Mahmud, along with Qusay, has led the efforts to conceal Iraq's programs for developing missiles and weapons of mass destruction. According to Scott Ritter, former chief inspector of UNSCOM, signals intelligence revealed that Mahmud had directed the Special Security Organization to remove documents from sensitive sites and delay inspectors in case that time was needed for evacuation.(27)

While not an agency in itself, al-Majlis al-Amn al-Qawmi (The National Security Council) is an important element of Iraq's security network. Saddam Hussein established the Council to manage the activities of the other intelligence agencies.(28) The Council is chaired by Qusay, and includes Abid Hamid Mahmud and the heads of Iraq's main security units.

A sub-committee of the National Security Council, known as the *al-Majlis al-Amn al-Khas* (the Special



Security Committee), coordinated Iraq's concealment effort,(29) presided over by Mahmud and senior figures from the intelligence/security agencies, as well as the Special Republican Guard.(30) The Committee, formed in 1996, employs approximately 2,000 security personnel, monitors the daily work of the inspectors and coordinates the removal or transfer of sensitive documents, equipment, and materials from one location to another.(31) It also has a role in importing necessary WMD material to rebuild Iraq's non-conventional arsenal.(32)

### *The National Monitoring Directorate*

Iraq established a unit to deal with the inspectors, as well as to observe and monitor their activities, known as the National Monitoring Directorate, headed by General Hussam Amin. The NMD was established in November 1993, in response to the long-term monitoring of Iraq called for in UN Resolution 715.(33) The Special Security Committee essentially is a shadow organization of the NMD. It is believed that the NMD is divided into departments responsible for concealment affairs, such as the Missiles, Chemical, Biological, and Nuclear departments, all of which are responsible for securing these respective WMD programs in Iraq.(34)

UN inspectors coordinated with the NMD over inspections and the latter provided UNSCOM with technical and logistical support, such as ground and air services. However, the U.S. government considered this group an anti-inspections organization that warned other Iraqi government agencies of impending visits so that they could conceal materials.(35)

The NMD assigned minders who escorted the inspectors, ostensibly to overcome problems that might rise during an inspection.(36) However, minders from the NMD were reported to have interrupted interviews and instructed Iraqi site personnel to provide wrong information or to refuse to answer relevant questions.(37) The NMD would not allow personnel at a site to speak with inspectors unless these minders were present. The White House report states, "The minders are often former engineers and scientists with direct WMD (weapons of mass destruction) experience, and first-hand knowledge of what needs to be protected from the inspectors when they arrive at a facility." (38) Richard Butler accused this organization of frequently obstructing the work of his inspectors.(39) Hans Blix's statement at the UN Security Council on February 14, 2003 indicated that the minders on the inspections often outnumbered the inspectors. He said, "The number of Iraqi minders during inspections had often reached a ratio as high as five per inspector. During the talks in January in Baghdad, the Iraqi side agreed to keep the ratio to about one to one." (40)

## **SECURITY AGENCIES OF THE CONCEALMENT APPARATUS(41)**

### *Special Security*

*Al-Amn al-Khas* (Special Security or SSO) is responsible for command-and-control oversight of the concealment apparatus. The current director of the SSO is Saddam's son, Qusay Hussein, who also controls the Special Republican Guard. The responsibilities of SSO towards Iraq's WMD program include purchasing foreign arms and technology, securing Iraq's most critical military

industries, and directing efforts to conceal Iraq's WMD programs.(42) It manages the concealment of Iraq's non-conventional weapons as well as the relevant scientific documentation of these programs.(43)

UNSCOM ascertained that overall direction of the concealment apparatus comes from the SSO.(44) As part of UNSCOM's investigations into the apparatus, inspectors tried but failed to access SSO sites. Iraq failed to even acknowledge SSO, Special Republican Guard, or General Intelligence involvement in these operations, even though inspections obtained an SSO document related to dual-use biological activities and materials.(45)

One reason Saddam entrusted a security/intelligence agency, the SSO, to deploy these weapons—as opposed to a regular military unit—was out of fear that such powerful assets might encourage these soldiers to launch a coup.(46) Saddam wanted to ensure that those who controlled, and might use, WMD were the personnel most loyal and close to Saddam as possible.(47)

Hussein Kamil, Saddam's cousin and son-in-law (as well as the then minister of MIMI), was instrumental in the creation of this ultra-elite intelligence agency.(48) Kamil defected to Jordan in August 1995, where he revealed to Western intelligence sources the concealment techniques of the apparatus that he worked so diligently to build.(49)

This agency also controls units of Iraq's Chemical Corps, which is responsible for deploying Iraq's chemical weapons arsenal.(50) During the 1991 Gulf War, the SSO controlled and concealed the SCUD missile arsenal.(51) Hussein Kamil stated, "Saddam declared that if contact with him was severed [SSO units possessing non-conventional warheads were based deep in the deserts of western Iraq], and if SSO officers believed that communications had been broken off because of a nuclear attack on Baghdad, they should mate the chemical and biological warheads in their custody with missiles in the possession of the regular missile force and launch them against Israel."(52) The Chemical Corps, in addition to deploying chemical munitions, also played a role in salvaging Iraq's chemical warfare capability after the 1991 Gulf War.(53)

During an inspection, UNSCOM discovered that the SSO not only had a role in deploying chemical agents but was also involved in the development of biological weapons, proven by confiscated SSO documents detailing the testing of agents such as anthrax and botulinum toxin.(54) Another UNSCOM inspection discovered that Staff 7 of the SSO developed gas gangrene bacteria.(55) Apparently, an SSO intelligence assessment of Israel's WMD capability in 1988 encouraged the Iraqi regime to further develop biological weapons as a strategic deterrent.(56)

After the 1991 war, Special Security coordinated the drive to thwart the efforts of UNSCOM to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Its activities in the concealment apparatus included evacuating materials from sites in advance of the inspection teams, or delaying the inspectors until all materials were removed.(57) Because of these activities, its facilities were among the key targets of Anglo-American air strikes during the Desert Fox operation in December 1998.(58)

Hussein Kamil also used Special Security to facilitate his extensive arms and technology procurement network as part of Iraq's covert drive to build weapons of mass destruction. Up until 1995, Hussein Kamil headed this agency as well as the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization and the Military Industrial Commission, essentially emerging as the father of Iraq's WMD program.

The covert techniques Kamil learned while head of the SSO aided his quest in obtaining sophisticated Western technology through a clandestine procurement network. The SSO served as the central coordinating body between MIC, *al-Istikhbarat*, *al-Mukhabarat*, and the military in the covert procurement of the necessary components for Iraq's WMD arms.(59) Special Security also recruited personnel for MIC after conducting extensive security checks, including soldiers with engineering or other technical qualifications.(60)

Ritter indicates that Special Security has a Concealment Operations Room in its Baghdad headquarters, which operates as the concealment effort's main coordinating center.(61) According to Butler, the presidential palaces of Saddam Hussein have also served as the nerve centers of the concealment process, as well as physical structures where WMD components could be stored.(62)

Along with the Special Republican Guard, the SSO also has a role in transporting components of Iraq's WMD program. Their vehicles were disguised as refrigerated container trucks, and were responsible for carrying nuclear material. The destination of these truck convoys would be determined by the central command of the SSO.(63)

Sensitive WMD related documents were guarded by the SSO and it kept a microfilm copy of such documents in reserve. They were responsible for transporting this archive and storing it in civilian facilities such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.(64) If Western intelligence learned the location of this archive, the tactic of constantly moving it around would keep its current location a secret.(65)

According to the White House dossier, the SSO continues its activities in monitoring the activities of inspectors. It states, "The SSO tracks the number, expertise, equipment, vehicles, location, and heading of inspectors." (66) Powell told the UN that the SSO also trains those involved in Iraq's WMD program to evade UN inspections. He said, "In mid-November [2002], just before the inspectors returned, Iraqi experts were ordered to report to the headquarters of the Special Security Organization to receive counter-intelligence training. The training focused on evasion methods, interrogation resistance techniques, and how to mislead inspectors." (67)

### *Military Intelligence*

*Mudiriyyat al-Istikhbarat al-Askariyya al-Amma* (General Military Intelligence Directorate) is responsible for the strategic concealment of Iraq's WMD program. Its responsibilities include assessing threats of a military nature to Iraq and the protection of military and military-industrial facilities.

After the 1981 Israeli raid on Iraq's Osiraq nuclear research facility, Military Intelligence turned to the Soviet KGB for assistance. From 1982 to 1985, the KGB instructed Military Intelligence in concealment and protection techniques for its military programs and facilities, as well as strategic deception methods, such as how to conceal activities and sites from satellite and aerial reconnaissance. At the same time, Special Security watched over the activities of *al-Istikhbarat* and the KGB during the Iran-Iraq War.(68) Thus, Iraq's activities in concealing its WMD program did not begin with UN inspections, but rather in the early 1980s. The KGB may have instructed Military Intelligence how to build facilities in tunnels or in mountains;(69) create decoy facilities to confuse intelligence-gathering activities; and conceal strategic facilities especially from aerial surveillance.(70)

Ironically, the Iraqis also learned valuable lessons in concealment from the United States itself. During



part of the Iran-Iraq war, the United States shared intelligence with Iraq on Iranian troop movements. During this period, Military Intelligence was responsible for receiving this information and analyzing it. However, the SSO closely supervised the interaction between al-Istikhbarat and U.S. intelligence sources.(71) It could thus learn the ways that U.S. aerial reconnaissance and signals intelligence uncovered strategic facilities.(72)

### *General Intelligence*

Da'irat Al-Mukhabarat al-'amma, The General Intelligence Directorate is roughly divided into two departments, responsible for internal and international operations respectively, and consequently deals with covert operations relating to WMD materials inside Iraq, as well as clandestine procurement of weapons material abroad. Directorate 19 is tasked with covert procurement of necessary WMD materials and components from foreign countries.(73) In this process, Directorate 19 used Iraqi diplomatic missions and established front companies. For example, UNSCOM reports it obtained direct evidence of this agency's involvement when long-range missile gyroscopes, accelerometers and test equipment were discovered being imported into Iraq in 1995.(74)

Directorate 4 of this agency, known as the Secret Service, is responsible for domestic operations involving the WMD program, such as interpreting signals intelligence from the Al-Hadi unit. Al-Hadi is the organization responsible for collecting, processing, exploiting and disseminating signals, communications and electronic intelligence. Though it reports directly to the Office of the Presidential Palace, the intelligence it collects is passed on to other agencies for their utilization. Al-Hadi facilities operate around-the-clock, with five other ground collection stations located around Iraq. The organization's sophisticated computer equipment intercepts both domestic and international communications traffic, and monitors the communications traffic of UN inspectors in Iraq. (75)

Kamil's defection to Jordan caused the restructuring of security for military industries. Previously, this service was provided by Special Security, which was also headed by Kamil. After he fled Iraq, the SSO's function was shared with the General Intelligence, complying with Saddam's security doctrine of not allowing any one agency to have a monopoly over any one area of security. Directorate 28 of the General Intelligence was established specifically to deal with security for Iraq's Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization.(76)

Al-Haris al-Jamhuri al-Khas (The Special Republican Guard) was founded after 1991, following two assassination attempts on Saddam Hussein.(77) It is responsible for the logistics of moving proscribed materials since this role requires communications and transportation support of a highly reliable and sensitive nature. Additionally, it conceals certain military components, as well as provides security for various facilities related to Iraq's WMD program.(78)

The SRG played a role in securing WMD warheads and maintained control of a few launchers after the Gulf War. According to an Iraqi defector, the SRG hid two missile launchers from UN weapons inspectors.(79) SRG forces often guarded the facilities visited by UNSCOM, obstructing them from conducting their searches in many cases.(80) An example of their activities includes an incident in July 1991, when the SRG received a shipment of production equipment and critical components for the indigenous missile program. They buried these materials in a private villa belonging to Izz al-Din

al-Majid, a major in the Special Republican Guard, in a suburb west of Baghdad.(81) In March 1992, the SRG moved them to another unspecified location.(82) During this period, SRG vehicles transferred equipment involved in nuclear weapons production in order to conceal them from IAEA inspectors. Reconnaissance imagery taken during inspections in 1996 and 1997 showed significant SRG vehicle movement at sites under UNSCOM inspection.(83)

At a remote site called al-*Ḥaḥā* Alam, the Iraqis declared that ten SRG vehicles containing prohibited missile items were sent there in July 1991. According to UNSCOM's imagery of this area during that time, Ritter wrote, there were in fact more than 100 vehicles present at this remote location. On a related point, however, Ritter notes that in July 1998, Iraq conceded that for two years it had misled the Commission with false claims of unilaterally destroying components for its indigenous missile engine program.(84) It was also reported that the SRG was seen transporting concrete pillars whose size and dimensions, according to Rolf Ekeus, former executive chairman of UNSCOM, indicated they were actually SCUD missiles.(85)

Mudiriyyat al-Amn al-*Ḥaḥā* Amm (General Security Directorate) is essentially a political security police force, whose paramilitary wing Quwat al-Tawari<sup>ḥ</sup> (the Emergency Forces) provides security for concealed components of Iraq's WMD program. For example al-Quwat al-Tawari<sup>ḥ</sup> units were responsible for hiding Iraqi ballistic missile components.(86) Thus, its mission is similar to that of the SRG, demonstrating once again how Saddam divides responsibilities among military units for protecting his military programs.

Traditionally, the military procurement system of Iraq was managed by the *Wizarat al-Sana<sup>ʿ</sup> wa Tasni<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Askari* (The Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization or MIMI).(87) In August 1987, the law of Military Industrialization was passed giving Hussein Kamil the chance to augment his role in the domestic arms industry.(88) That same year, the Ministry of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Light Industry and Special Security Department, as well as the General Technical Industry Corporation were consolidated into the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization.(89)

The Military Industrialization Commission (MIC—*Ḥiyat al-Tasni<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Askari*)(90) was created in 1988 by Hussein Kamil to serve as the key agency within MIMI for acquiring and developing equipment for Iraq's military industrial establishments. According to UNSCOM, The concealment and deception activities had distinct technical requirements. This implied, inter alia, the continued involvement of the Military Industrial Commission.(91) MIC's Technical Department was responsible for covert manufacturing and its Commercial Department for the covert procurement of Iraq's WMD program.(92) It was further divided into units for research and development, commercial activities, planning, continuity, and technology.(93) Scott Ritter relates how MIC employees were asked to take sensitive documents home with them so that they would not be discovered.(94)

During the Iran-Iraq War, MIMI was responsible for innovations in the development of Iraq's WMD arsenal, as well as its conventional arsenal. MIMI successfully modified Iraqi aircraft to give Iraq an air surveillance capability (airborne warning and control system), as well as modifying its Soviet aircraft for mid-air refueling.(95) After the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, Iraq's arms program continued unabated. In May 1989, Hussein Kamil proclaimed that Iraq's industrialization program was intended to provide all of Iraq's basic industrial supplies from indigenous sources.(96) One

of MIMI's goals was to develop an infrastructure that would allow Iraq to produce everything needed to use any WMD weapon.(97) December 1989, Kamil announced that MIMI had developed a long-range missile, known as Al-Abid, with a range of 1,110 miles.(98)

The current head of MIMI is Abd al-Tawab al-Mulla Huwaysh, who replaced the former head of this organization, General Daif Abd al-Majid, in 1997.(99) Huwaysh, (who comes from Saddam's hometown of Tikrit), along with senior figures from this ministry, met with Al-Abid Hamid Mahmud every week.(100) During these meetings, it is believed that the security of the Ministry and the concealment of the WMD program were discussed. Key figures that have attended these meetings include General Amr Muhammad Rashid (from the Ubaydi family), responsible for the development of Iraq's missile program, Amr Al-Sa'adi, a high-ranking member in MIMI and Ja'far Dhiya Ja'far, who is responsible for Iraq's nuclear program.(101)

MIMI employed a network of stated-owned institutions to buy and build Iraq's WMDs, including the necessary technology from the West. MIMI often used civilian activities as a front for procuring equipment to produce these weapons, and then transferred these materials from foreign suppliers directly to military projects. For example, fronts for purchasing materials for dams were sent to the Condor II ballistic missile program while others were used for a proposed Iraqi super gun, capable of extremely long-range artillery fire.

The military side of MIMI produced supplies to complete weapons systems. MIMI had civilian production facilities to cover up the ultimate destination of the military-related technology that was shipped to these weapons-related facilities. Altogether, it is estimated that, at its peak, MIMI operated 60 establishments connected to Iraq's WMD program.(102) For example, the Badr General Establishment, Al-Kindi Research Complex, the Nasr State Establishment, the Salah al-Din State Establishment, The Nida' Factory, The Nu'man factory, Al-Qadisiyya State Establishment, Al-Qa'qa State Establishment, State Establishment for Automobile Industries, and State Establishment for Mechanical Industries were all reportedly involved with the program to modify and produce Scud-B/al-Hussein class missiles.(103)

Iraqi security documents left in Kuwait during the 1991 Gulf War provide evidence of the functions, chains-of-command and objectives of MIMI and MIC from 1990 to 1991.(104)

Secretary of State Powell indicated in his briefing at the UN that the Iraqis had the capability to eavesdrop on UN weapons inspectors' communications. Such eavesdropping has been a recurring phenomenon over the years. Correspondence on August 16, 1990, from Ali Hassan al-Majid (at that time the head of the Ba'ath party in Kuwait) ordered Hussein Kamil, then head of MIMI, to forward the intelligence gathered from their eavesdropping equipment and stations, which are under the control of the Center of Technical Research.(105)

On September 17, 1990, the Iraqis showed interest in a Kuwaiti government building for scientific research that had a storage area for chemicals.(106) Ali Hassan al-Majid forwarded the letter to the MIMI representative in Kuwait on the next day, informing him to do what you need to do. (107)

On that same day, Hussein Kamil wrote to Ali Hassan al-Majid, informing him that there were substantial materials in storage facilities and in private factories in Kuwait that MIMI desperately needed,

such as precursors for making plastics and substances that could be used to substitute for other unspecified materials. Kamil had to ask permission from Ali Hassan al-Majid, who was the de facto governor of Kuwait (as well as his uncle), to be granted the power to take all the needed materials. Kamil stresses that due to the UN sanctions, MIMI has had difficulties in acquiring basic elements for its production efforts.(108) Ali Hassan al-Majid responded to Kamil saying that he would form a committee to decide on what could and could not be transported from Kuwait.(109) There was an implicit tension in the correspondence between nephew and uncle, where Kamil wanted an agreement to withdraw any materials he wanted from Kuwait, while Ali Hassan al-Majid responded indirectly that such power would not be granted.

From October to November 1990, MIMI requested the reallocation of refrigerators, freon gas cooling compressors, water coolers,(110) 800 tons of reinforced iron,(111) 700 tons of aluminum cables,(112) copper pipes, spare parts for refrigerators,(113) an oxygen device,(114) as well as an oven in the Kuwait airport that could reach temperatures over 1200 degrees centigrade that was an utmost necessity.(115) While it is difficult to link this material to WMD applications, these requests in 1990 demonstrated how Hussein Kamil gave a shopping list to Ali Hassan al-Majid of the materials that MIMI required in a way comparable to how WMD shopping might be conducted.

Delegations were also sent abroad to obtain WMD materials. For example, in October 1990, MIMI dispatched a mission of engineers.(116) A ministry memo indicated that such teams included military generals and army engineers whose task was to obtain materials necessary to MIMI's objectives.(117)

The vast nature of Saddam's concealment apparatus is an indication of how much he has invested in protecting the crown jewels of his military arsenal.

A select committee under the supervision of Presidential Secretary Abid Hamid Mahmud makes the decisions regarding concealment. However, Saddam Hussein also assigns many duties regarding WMD to each of the agencies of this apparatus, following his policy that competition will produce better results, thus decentralizing the network ostensibly centered around Mahmud.

For example, both the Presidential Secretary and Special Security rival each other for operational control of the concealment process. MIMI, MIC, Special Security and General Intelligence all play a role in covert procurement of Iraq's WMD technology in foreign countries. The Special Committee of the National Security Council and the National Monitoring Directorate were designed to have identical missions. Both the SRG and the Emergency Forces compete in protecting, moving and concealing Iraq's programs. Special Security and General Intelligence are both responsible for providing security for Iraq's military facilities. In Saddam's vision, if one agency fails in its mandate, another will compensate for its failure.

The Iraqi concealment apparatus has over seven years of experience now in countering UN inspections, as well as a four year window-of-opportunity to hide, conceal and camouflage its WMD program in the absence of any inspectors. The concealment apparatus benefited from these years of expertise to call on numerous intelligence agents, scientists, and soldiers to fill its ranks.

French inspectors on the UNMOVIC team have remarked that the Iraqis have made  $\frac{1}{2}$  progress in their know-how and ability to hide things in the twelve and a half years of embargo.  $\frac{1}{2}$  (118) Other inspectors expressed how impressed they were with the apparatus' professional skill, which makes it  $\frac{1}{2}$  difficult to find irrefutable proof and evidence of flagrant violations.  $\frac{1}{2}$  (119)

The UNMOVIC team in Iraq has a formidable adversary. UN inspections have slowed Iraq's progress in further developing its WMD capability, but the scope of this concealment apparatus could indicate that many of these programs remain largely intact.

## Chart 1: The Iraqi Concealment Apparatus

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